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# Congress Curbs CIA Advisory Role Abroad

By KIM WILLENSON

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — Congress has quietly passed a death sentence on a controversial program that put hundreds of U. S. police advisers — and CIA men — into Asia, Africa and Latin America over the last 20 years.

The execution warrant for the Public Safety Program of the Agency of International Development (AID) was part of the 1974 Foreign Assistance Act recently signed by President Nixon.

Congressmen who backed the repeal measure contend the "safety program" led to a multitude of sins in support of military dictatorships. Sen. James Abourezk, D-S.D., said, "they are using our money to suppress their own people."

He said the program was responsible for political repression, imprisonment and torture of dissidents by U. S.-advised police in Vietnam, Thailand, Greece, Brazil, Uruguary and elsewhere. Other critics say the program involved political assassinations.

True or not, Public Safety did serve as a cover for several operations. One was the CIA-financed "Phoenix" program in South Vietnam. Public Safety funds also financed the Vietnamese prison system, including the infamous "tiger cages" on Con Son Island.

Dan MItrione, the U. S. adviser whose kidnaping and execution by Uruguayan Tupamaro terrorists in 1970 was the subject of the recent film, "State of Seige," was one of its men.

AID began advising foreign police in a small way in 1955. The Kennedy administration, frightened by threats of all-out guerrilla war, pulled several programs together into Public Safety in 1962.

It grew into a major project. At its peak in the late 1960s, it had 458 "advisers" in 34 countries and spent more than $30 million a year.

It has since been reduced considerably. Currently, 214 advisers operate in 18 nations on an annual budget of $7.4 million. All will be withdrawn except a small team in Saudi Arabia, which pays for its own program.

At one time, there were 233 Public Safety advisers in Vietnam, 50 in Thailand and 10 in Laos. Public Safety supplied not only standard police equipment — pistols, shotguns and tear gas — but heavy mortars, machineguns, helicopters and armored cars.

It also opened an "International Police Academy," known as "The Car Barn" for its location in an abandoned streetcar terminal in the Georgetown district of Washington. People who have seen it likened "The Car Barn" to a James Bond movie, with its firing ranges, intelligence and communications rooms and other facilities. It trained 4,758 foreign policemen over an 11-year period.

Public Safety also runs more than a dozen training courses for foreign policemen in the United States under contract with the CIA, U. S. Border Patrol, FBI, the Army and other agencies.

Much of the controversy surrounding Public Safety centers on its connections with the CIA, its involvement in Indochina and its alleged predilection for teaching the tactics of political repression.

The CIA connection is no longer as secret as it once was. There was a time in Indochina when many an isolated province capital featured a team of beefy Americans wearing tinted Air Force glasses and dressed in conspicuously non-military sports clothes.

The lived in walled villas whose roofs sprouted odd-shaped antennas — and they usually went into hiding when a journalist showed up in town. AID officials tried to pass them off as "some of our police advisers." A spokesman once told this correspondent that they didn't want to be seen because they were "Shy."

No more. The current Public Safety director, Lauren J. Goin, acknowledged in an interview that CIA operatives were hidden in the Special Branch and Border Patrol advisory teams in Vietnam and Thailand.

One reason for the new openness is that AID itself has grown uneasy about CIA penetration in the face of a steady barrage of congressional criticism.

Goin acknowledges this, although he partly defends the connection.

"We're all Americans, and whether or not it is a comfortable relationship (with the CIA) is not really germane," he said. "But the fact that it exists at all created a misunderstanding about the purposes of the Public Safety Program in the minds of members of Congress."

Goin said every country uses the law as "a mechanism for behavioral control." But he said many underdeveloped countries use fear to enforce compliance with the law.

"Our doctrine is to turn that around 180 degrees — to get the police to operate in a way that makes their role acceptable to the people," he said.

This doctrine of "humane" law enforcement, Goin said, was one of the three basic principles laid down by President John F. Kennedy in 1962. The others were minimum use of force and concentration on countersubversion efforts.

The first two principles do not appear to have meshed very well with the third, at least in South Vietnam which contributed most to Public Safety's unpopularity in Congress.

Vietcong terrorism in that country forced Public Safety to move South Vietnam in the same direction. Vietnam's police force swelled from 30,000 to 100,000 men between 1963 and 1972, many organized as paramilitary units.

About 33,000 operated at the village and hamlet level, which had never before been heavily policed. Their ostensible assignment was to help protect the peasants. Instead, they became a political arm of Saigon, stamping out non-Communist dissent as well as Communist terrorism.

Public Safety also masterminded programs under which every South Vietnamese had to carry an identity card and highway movement was controlled with an extensive series of checkpoints. Both programs led police to extract graft for minor infractions.

The identity program led to a vast computerized central police file used to keep track of political activity and control dissident.

Ultimately, when the Americans decided to fight fire with fire as far as terrorism was concerned, Public Safety provided the cover for the CIA-funded "Phoenix" program designed to "neutralize" the Vietcong infrastructure.

Many of these "neutralizations" — which ran to 30,000 a year in the early 1970s — were nothing more of less than assassinations by "The Prues" — Privisional Reconnaissance Units.

Critics contended — and some American advisers conceded — that arrests and assassinations often were made on the basis of faulty, second and third hand information.

But the Vietnamese practice that seems to have caused the most outrage in Congress was the jailing of tens of thousands of non-Communist dissidents for political offenses.

Goin acknowledged it may have been a mistake for Public Safety to get so deeply involved in Vietnam. But he adds that "you have to judge it in the context of the foreign